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ABSTRACT

This paper explores a number of research and development projects relating to the provision and promotion of values in Northern Ireland. A brief overview is given of current definitions and interpretations of values and education in a range of European countries and the United States. The main findings emerging from research in this area in Northern Ireland are then examined and followed by a review of a development project that grew out of the research. This project, entitled "Primary Values," demonstrates how a values framework has been employed to facilitate primary school teachers' engagement with a wide range of social, emotional, and moral issues, which include identity, sectarianism, conflict resolution, and citizenship. The project offers an example, through the use of stories and structured inquiry, of how teachers can access and manage meaningful reflection and dialogue around values and value-related issues in the elementary school classroom. (Contains a 36-item bibliography.) (Author/BT)

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by

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VALUES IN EDUCATION AND THE PROMOTION OF CITIZENSHIP IN NORTHERN IRELAND

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Abstract

This paper explores a number of research and development projects relating to the provision and promotion of values in education in Northern Ireland. A brief overview is given of current definitions and interpretations of values and education in a range of European countries and the USA. The main findings emerging from research in this area in Northern Ireland are then examined and followed by a review of a development project, which grew out of the research. This project, entitled 'Primary Values', demonstrates how a values framework has been employed to facilitate primary school teachers' engagement with a wide range of social, emotional and moral issues, which include identity, sectarianism, conflict resolution and citizenship.

Introduction

In his book 'Better Schools', Beck claims that the ultimate goal of schooling is human well-being. He goes on to suggest that *"basic values (survival, health and friendship), spiritual values, moral values, social and political values... form a comprehensive value system which serves human well-being"* and that as educators are generally concerned with promoting young people's well-being, they will be concerned with the educational values which enhance this. (Beck 1990:2).

This broad field of values and education has been a focus for research and development for over forty years, although references to it may be traced back to the early part of the last century and the work of progressive educationalists such as Dewey (1916) in his book, 'Democracy in Education.' In more recent years, educators have been encouraged to reflect on and articulate their values with greater strength (McLaughlin 1995), as societies become increasingly plural, secular and violent, and as a growing gulf emerges between the values of some governments and teachers.

The term 'values' is generally considered rather ambiguous, and educational researchers and practitioners have frequently tended to substitute a range of other terms such as beliefs, ideals, attitudes, virtues and principles in their writing and conversation. Definitions of values are numerous and wide-ranging. They have been defined as *"things which are considered 'good' in themselves (such as beauty, truth, honesty and loyalty)"* (Halstead, 1996:5), *"the criteria by which we judge people, objects, ideas and actions to be good, worthwhile...or...bad* [and] *despicable"* (Shaver & Strong 1976:15) and *"those things (objects, activities, experiences) which promote human well-being"* (Beck 1990:2). A definition has also been drawn between values education and values *in* education. Barr in his paper 'The Importance of the Preposition' suggests that values in education is about *"very many things...the relationships teachers have with pupils...methodology...language...every aspect of school life." Values Education on the other hand "is a separate, stand-alone component...*[which may be] *narrow, sectional, ideological even...not possible to accommodate in a curriculum which strives to be ...progressive, broad and balanced"*

(Barr 1995:8) The term values education itself, however has been defined to encompass many different areas, including moral education, character education, civic education, citizenship education, moralogy, Religious Education and Personal and Social Education. Often the terms are used interchangeably, though as Berkowitz (1995) points out they mean quite different things. A review of research into values in education reveals that it is difficult not only to define the term itself, but it is also difficult to find consensus about what values should be 'educated' and how these should be educated.

A view of values education from Europe and the USA

The field of values and education has become a greater focus within European education in recent years. In 1994, a collaborative project to review values education across twenty-six European countries was undertaken by UNESCO in conjunction with the Consortium of Institutions for Research and Development in Education in Europe (CIDREE). Essentially, this project provided a framework for educational representatives to share and discuss aspects of values education in their respective countries. A number of key issues relating to the historical and ideological background to values education in Europe emerged from the project. Firstly, values education appeared to be closely related to the political developments of a country, because every government emphasised different values. Religion was also a significant influence on a values education curricula and how it was presented. Many education systems appeared to be in a process of continual reform with respect to values issues, with these both influencing and reflecting social and ideological change, giving evidence of strong movements towards democracy, secularism and pupil centred choice. As many countries became more ideologically diverse and socially plural, greater tensions resulted over values issues and education. Such tensions were concerned with the rights and responsibilities of the individual and society and whether values should be set in a religious frame (Taylor 1994).

In the United States, the absence of organised traditions of religion from state institutions (including schools) has led to a stronger emphasis being placed on democratic education, character education, and moral reasoning dilemmas, such as that employed in the 'Just Community' approach (Kohlberg and Higgins 1987). This approach aims to introduce pupils to participative democracy and present them with greater opportunities for self regulation and moral awareness. Politically, moral education has become a very popular as well as a very polarising issue in the US. Politicians have appeared willing to adopt the rhetoric of moral education, but less eager to identify the specifics of moral education programmes. Berkowitz (1996) suggests that *"an enlightened administration is needed that will dedicate itself to the good of children and communities and not merely to what will endear it to the electorate"* (p.38). He also advocates that quality outcome and process evaluations are required of a wide range of programmes, in order to identify *"which work and which do not"* (ibid).

Developments in values in education in Great Britain

Over the last number of years a significant emphasis has been placed by subsequent British governments on social and community values and moral education. In 1996, an initiative entitled the 'National Forum on Values in Education and the Community' was launched to ascertain whether a consensus could be reached on a range of values statements relating to personal values, values associated with relationships and values relating to the environment and responsibilities to society. A set of support and guidance materials were then developed and implemented in schools (SCAA 1996). This consultation initiative was launched partly in response to what some described as

a "moral crisis" or a "breakdown of values" in society. A number of factors were perceived as contributing to this situation.

Firstly, rapidly changing social structures had led to the formation of different family patterns, increased geographical mobility and more advanced communication networks. The emergence of a growing entrepreneurial, cost-effective society saw the individual rising to the fore and this was accompanied by a subsequent decline in co-operative and supportive community structures. There were also growing concerns about levels of indiscipline, bullying, abuse and harassment in schools and widespread revulsion to several shocking murders of young children and school teachers.

The response from the present government through education has been to devise a statutory programme for schools in England and Wales entitled 'Education for Citizenship and Democracy'. As well as *"promoting an understanding of their roles and responsibilities as citizens in a modern democracy"*, one of the aims of the programme is to *"help pupils deal with difficult moral and social questions that arise in their lives and in society"* (National Curriculum 1999). Further provision is also made through programmes in Personal and Social Development and Religious Education. While the factors of change outlined above are equally applicable to Northern Ireland, there also exist a number of circumstances and developments which are quite unique to the area.

Values in Education in Northern Ireland

In recent years Northern Ireland has undergone significant political and educational change. Paramilitary cease-fires and the emergence of positive political dialogue have been met by a desire amongst educationalists for the educational curriculum to reflect a more optimistic climate in its content and implementation. A report emerging from the Department of Education (Northern Ireland) stated that *"significant challenges face contemporary society in Northern Ireland and processes to promote social inclusion and accommodate religious and cultural diversity must be developed."* It went on to state that *"a seminal purpose of the Northern Ireland Education Service is the promotion of tolerance and reconciliation. All schools have a duty to promote such a culture in keeping with the particular ethos and circumstances within which they operate."* (DENI 1999:25, 29)

It was within this context of political and educational change that research was commissioned into values in education in Northern Ireland by the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (NICCEA). The main remit was to *"research existing approaches into values in education and to evaluate the current provision for values in the Northern Ireland curriculum"* (Montgomery & Smith 1997:1). One of the primary objectives of the research was to inform curriculum developers in their preparation for a major review of the Northern Ireland education Curriculum (NICCEA 1999). It was also anticipated that the research outcomes would contribute, in some measure, to highlighting a range of values which could underpin the framework for the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

In the course of the research, a wide range of educationalists were consulted and asked to consider the extent to which they felt values permeated the formal, informal and hidden curricula in schools and to reflect on how they saw values impinging on their teaching (if indeed, they impinged at all). The main findings to emerge from the 'Values in Education in Northern Ireland' research suggested that while a majority of teachers recognised that values are inherent within every teaching and learning context, few could actually identify how an explicit consideration of values informed their daily preparation for teaching. The research also identified a concern on the part of teachers regarding an over-emphasis on the cognitive and technical dimensions of

the curriculum, with the social, moral and emotional aspects of pupils' development receiving less attention. Respondents were also concerned that developments in the area of values within the curriculum might mean they were being asked to promote a prescribed moral code of behaviour, and there was a deep resistance to such an approach by many teachers. On a practical note, teachers strongly requested that any attempts to give greater prominence to values in education should be approached through the existing curriculum framework and not become an added imposition. Educationalists on the whole however welcomed the opportunity to engage in dialogue around the issue and the majority of teachers expressed a willingness to explore values in education in greater detail.

The research findings from this project together with other pertinent research in the field, and current innovations in education then informed the creation of a curriculum development project. The main focus of this project is the development of a values education programme at primary level (4 -11 year olds) and the provision of materials to support teachers as they seek to promote children's moral, social and emotional well-being.

Promoting values in a Primary Education Context

In response to teachers' requests, but also in the interests of effective curriculum permeation, the development of the primary education resources, entitled 'Primary Values' was strongly linked to various elements of the formal and informal curricula. At present there is a strong emphasis on literacy and talking and listening in the Northern Ireland Curriculum, particularly at primary level. There is also an ongoing demand for more practical approaches to be introduced in support of 'Education for Mutual Understanding' - a cross-curricular theme unique to the Northern Ireland Curriculum which addresses issues of *"self-respect and respect for others and the improvement of relationships between people of differing cultural traditions"* (NICC, 1990). Findings to emerge from various research programmes focusing on thinking skills, emotional development and classroom discussion techniques were also considered (McGuinness *et al* 1996, Goleman 1995, Sternberg, 1996, Fenwick 1998, Lipman, 1991, Fisher 1990, 1996). Significant developments concerning the Northern Ireland Curriculum, specifically in the areas of Personal and Social Development and Education for Democratic Citizenship contributed to the resource development along with documents relating to the proposed curriculum review (NICCEA 1999). A range of materials produced elsewhere in the UK and Ireland by bodies such as 'The Citizenship Foundation' (1994) and the 'Curriculum Development Unit' (1996) were also reviewed and piloted in some schools in order to inform the drafting of a Northern Ireland focused resource.

Themes in 'Primary Values'

As well as linking the resource strongly to the curriculum, the development strategy for 'Primary Values' also set out to encourage children to reflect on both their own values and attitudes and those of others, to develop their decision-making abilities, and importantly to experience enjoyment through their participation in discussions and activities. In order to provide some structure to the ubiquitous field of values, three main themes were identified; Identity (Who am I?), Interdependence (Getting on Together) and Conflict (Falling Out). A wide range of issues are then explored in relation to each of these;

- *Identity* - physical and emotional self, feelings, names, family attachments
- *Interdependence* - friendships, fairness, sharing, environment
- *Conflict* - sibling rivalry, prejudice, religious and cultural difference, sectarianism.

These themes are not mutually exclusive however and at times there is an unavoidable overlap in the issues being explored. The themes are further expanded

upon through a conceptual framework which illustrates the kind of knowledge, skills, values, issues and investigations which 'Primary Values' seeks to promote in a range of different contexts (the Self, Family, School, Community and Global). This framework is offered to teachers as a template that may be adapted to the needs of their own particular teaching context and indeed they have been encouraged to complete their own frameworks as they explore each of the three themes. Representing learning objectives on this framework also offers teachers a way of relating their teaching using 'Primary Values' to the attainment targets which are an integral element of the Northern Ireland Curriculum.

The findings from the 'Values in Education in Northern Ireland' research indicated that teachers were willing to engage more closely with values and related issues in the classroom, however they were concerned as to how this could be effectively achieved in practice. In designing the Primary Values resource, it was therefore necessary to identify a device through which values could be accessed and then effectively presented to children.

Story books

One of the most popular devices for exploring and discussing issues in the classroom is the story. Many educationalists have extolled the power of stories and their potential to contribute to the development of children's reading, listening and language skills (Beard 1987, McKenzie, 1986). Marriott (1991) comments on the particular attraction of picture books for primary school teachers highlighting several reasons which are in addition to those outlined above. He suggests that picture books can *"aid personal development and self-understanding by presenting characters and situations with which our own can be compared, and by giving us the chance to test out motives and decisions"* (p.5) They have the power to *"extend our experience and knowledge of life, by introducing us to other kinds of people, places, and situations"* (p.5). Picture books can also contribute to children's social experience, in that they are *"inherently sociable and provide opportunities for co-operative activities"* (p.12). Reading and listening to stories is also an enjoyable experience for many children (and adults), taking us, as Marriott suggests *"away from dreary routines to adventure and excitement...allowing us to escape to a more colourful, more dramatic or more congenial world"* (p.5)

A review was therefore undertaken of over 200 picture books and short stories and eight were finally selected for inclusion in the pilot version of Primary Values. (It is anticipated that at least a further four books will be added to the final version of the resource). The issues explored through each of the stories are also considered from a global perspective in a section of the resource entitled 'The Bigger Picture'. Pupils are introduced for example to children in need across the world - children as refugees, children in war zones, and children at work. In occupying this stance, pupils are encouraged to think of themselves as both local and global citizens and to develop a sense of belonging to both local and global communities. 'The Bigger Picture' also elaborates on the concept of interdependence and introduces pupils to an awareness of human, animal and environmental rights and responsibilities. The *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child* is referenced throughout the resource.

Identifying a suitable methodology

The themes and related issues underpinning the 'Primary Values' resource have been highlighted and the use of stories to access these has been described, however the question of how such issues are explored and discussed in the classroom still remains. Teachers consulted through the 'Values in Education (NI)' research did express a number of concerns around the teaching of moral and value-related topics. Some questioned the appropriateness of confronting younger children with moral uncertainties and expressed concerns about this arousing confusion in their minds or "shattering their illusions". Other teachers were anxious that they were expected to represent figures of moral authority in the classroom and many shied away from such

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a role. Thirdly, teachers were concerned about pupils' capacity to understand the complexities of social and moral issues and some therefore questioned the benefits of pupils engaging with such issues.

Research and indeed educational practice have demonstrated that it is not always possible to simply teach 'right' from 'wrong'. Indeed it is suggested that such an approach is ineffective and insufficient in the classroom, even if it were possible to identify a core set of values, which were "broadly acceptable" to society (Fisher, 1997). In the process of designing the 'Primary Values' resource, it was obvious from the outset that a well-structured and effective methodology would have to be to found which would support teachers and pupils' exploration of values in the classroom. It was anticipated that such an approach would;

- engage children in reasoning about social, moral and emotional issues;
- help them to explore the potential impact and outcomes of selecting particular words and actions;
- encourage them to discover that moral dilemmas are indeed complex and do not always have simple solutions; and
- have a well-defined structure which would provide teachers with access to moral dilemmas of concern to pupils and also support them on a voyage of moral discovery.

The 'Community of Inquiry'

Following a review of different approaches, the authors selected a methodology known as the 'community of inquiry.' This approach emphasises the importance of perceiving children as rational beings, capable of reasoning and engaging in reflective and sustained discussion around value-related issues. The concept of a 'community of inquiry' is not entirely new. Peirce, a nineteenth century philosopher is credited with the phrase 'community of inquiry' and Dewey linked democracy to 'inquiry' and then applied it to educational theory. The 'community of inquiry' was incorporated by Matthew Lipman into his 'Philosophy for Children' approach (Lipman, 1991), and further developed in resources and practice in the UK by Fisher (1991), Murris (1992) and The Citizenship Foundation (1994).

Fisher (1997) suggests that the philosophical dimension of inquiry initiates children into public discussion about meaning and values, and encourages them to think about what it means to be reasonable and to make moral judgements. In establishing a 'community of inquiry' in the classroom, children are given the opportunity to express their thoughts, feelings and experiences in a safe and creative context. They also benefit from sharing each others' knowledge, ideas and experiences and from feeling a valued part of the community. In addition, participation in the community promotes their thinking, language and expressive skills and also build self-esteem. The community can also offer an example of what it means to participate in a pluralistic, democratic group.

When discussing issues which may arise, for example from a story-telling activity, pupils are encouraged to learn to;

- explore issues of personal concern, such as friendship, death, bullying and fairness and more general philosophical issues such as identity, time and change;
- develop their own views and explore and challenge the views of others;
- be clear in their thinking, and make thoughtful judgements;
- listen and respect each other, and
- experience quiet moments of reflection.

The community of inquiry can therefore be seen to have a dual function, combining a *"rational structure (promotion of effective thinking and shared ideas) with a moral structure (mutual respect and shared democratic values)"* (ibid:4).

Establishing a 'community of inquiry' in the classroom

Employing the 'community of inquiry' in classroom discussion involves progression through several stages. The process outlined below represents the approach which has been adopted in the 'Primary Values' resource.

Community setting - To establish the 'community' in the classroom, it is important that pupils are seated in such a way that they can all see and hear each other, and be able to engage in effective dialogue and exchange. Ideally, pupils and teacher should be arranged in a circle, however this is not always possible in every classroom, due to restrictions in space or organisational difficulties, but pupils should be at least able to see and hear each other.

Ground rules - Pupils then set about establishing a set of ground rules which they agree to abide by throughout the discussion. These include rules such as "no put-downs", "only one person speaks at once", and "no shouting." Teachers may then record the children's rules on a poster and display this throughout the session to remind them of what they agreed at the beginning.

Shared reading/listening - Pupils then either engage in a shared reading or listening activity (if the teacher is reading the story) and they are encouraged to attend closely to the main characters and events in the story.

Thinking and Questioning - Once the story is read, pupils are then given some time to reflect on what they have heard or read and to identify what characters, issues or events were of particular interest to them. The teacher then encourages pupils to share their thoughts, questions or ideas about the story. Pupils' responses at this stage may be recorded by the teacher and displayed for the whole class to consider. If the 'community of inquiry 'is a new experience for the class, the teacher may select questions from a list which is included after each story in the 'Primary Values' resource, or indeed generate his or her own questions.

Discussion - The class then choose a number of questions or issues to explore, and the teacher facilitates the discussion by using open-ended link questions to encourage pupils to think critically and creatively and to participate in structured and respectful debate with their peers.

Extending thinking - Following a discussion, pupils are then encouraged to extend their thinking through a series of activities. In the resource these include ideas for creative writing, games, artwork, drama and further 'circle time' activities.

Evaluating the impact of the 'Community of Inquiry ' approach

A number of writers have noted the link between philosophy and values education, advocating the merits of this discipline in promoting children's thinking and reasoning (Haydon, 1997, Fisher 1997). Fisher identifies the argument for employing philosophical inquiry as follows;

1. *Democratic ideals require educational practices that avoid indoctrination and promote the individual's ability to judge for themselves.*
2. *Therefore in [values education] we should avoid moral instruction and concentrate on developing children's reflective judgement.*
3. *Developing children's reflective judgement requires a programme of values education through which children come to think critically and responsibly about moral issues.*
4. *Philosophy through a community of inquiry is [a good] discipline for promoting thinking in education*
5. *Therefore values education should include a form of classroom community of philosophical inquiry.* (Fisher 1997).

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The impact of values education as with any form of moral or emotional development is notoriously difficult to evaluate. It is sometimes possible to 'measure' the degree to which relationships have changed or improved or to observe whether an individual's behaviour has altered. It is however much more challenging to identify the impact of discussions such as those described in the 'community of inquiry' on individuals' thoughts, feelings and views. One approach which has been employed to evaluate these kinds of activities suggests that the level of reciprocity which exists in the behaviour of pupils and groups gives an indication of an individual's level of development. This is evidenced in the degree of 'give and take' in discussions and the extent to which an individual's behaviour demonstrates an awareness of values which relate to self-interest, to others or to society and beyond (ibid.).

At the level of self, one of the most important elements of development is 'Autonomy'. This may be described as a *"capacity for self-government"* (ibid:8), and is manifested in a child thinking for themselves, demonstrating a sense of self-esteem, and taking responsibility for their lives. The key question in developing autonomy is "what is right for me?" A second sign of reciprocity is 'Empathy'. This is where an individual is *"emotionally or cognitively 'in tune' with another person"* (ibid:9). It reflects the nature of relationships which an individual enjoys with others, and demonstrates the conflict which sometimes exists between the right to freedom and the responsibility which one has to others. In developing a sense of 'connection' with others, pupils realise for example that they are only one amongst many with interests and desires. The key question for empathy is "what is right for others?". The third level is that of 'Society and beyond' and requires the individual to develop an awareness of rights that 'transcend' individual interest. Transcendence relates to the concept of justice and to principles of fairness, seeking to identify what is good, right or fair for individuals in a given situation. The key question here is "what is right for all?" (ibid.).

Pupils' development through these various levels clearly requires a level of emotional awareness and understanding both of the themselves and others. Throughout their participation in a 'community of inquiry', pupils are encouraged to reflect on and express their emotions and to develop an understanding of, and empathy with the feelings of their peers. The nature of this 'emotional learning' is closely linked to Salovey's definition of 'emotional intelligence'. This emphasises self-awareness, management of emotions, motivating the self, empathy and the effective handling of relationships (Salovey 1995). Participation in the 'community of inquiry' may therefore contribute not insignificantly to the development of what Gardner (1993) describes as interpersonal intelligence ("[having the]*capacity to discern and respond appropriately to...other people")* and intrapersonal intelligence ("[having]*access to one's own feelings and the ability to discriminate among them and draw upon them to* [help] *guide behaviour")* (p.9).

The Implementation of 'Primary Values' in Northern Ireland primary schools

The 'Primary Values' resource is currently being piloted across 60 primary schools in Northern Ireland and a formal evaluation of the pilot schools' experiences is planned for June 2000. Some initial feedback has been collected however, from participating teachers. A number of key issues were identified in their responses. Firstly, many teachers have commented on the appropriateness of the stories and the interest which pupils have demonstrated in the issues. Quite a number drew attention to pupils' interest in one particular story which addresses issues of sectarianism and religious and cultural difference. They reported having reflective and meaningful discussions with pupils and exploring issues which they might previously "have steered clear of." This is an encouraging response and particularly so as recent research in Northern

Ireland suggests that children as young as five and six years are capable of developing sectarian attitudes and behaviour (Connolly 1999).

Teachers have also appreciated the cross-curricular nature of Primary Values and the potential it has to link with various areas of the curriculum, particularly literacy, talking and listening and EMU. Teachers have also broadly welcomed the thematic structure and 'community of inquiry' approach in helping them to broach a variety of moral, social and emotional issues which previously they were reluctant to do. Evidently, the 'community of inquiry' approach is still a comparatively new concept for many teachers and there are considerable challenges for them as they seek to develop appropriate facilitation, discussion and management skills with their classes.

Some teachers indicated that discussions conducted in classrooms with pupils 'spilled over' into staffrooms and several schools have reported establishing a values discussion group amongst staff. Several schools have also taken the resource and considered how it might contribute to a whole school development policy, implemented through EMU, RE, and Personal and Social Education programmes at a formal level and through policies and staff reviews at an informal level.

In the wake of curriculum review, where teachers have demanded that greater emphasis is placed on the affective and social dimensions of the curriculum, the resources have been perceived as going some way to supporting teachers' willingness to engage more directly with these areas. The current proposals for Personal and Social Development at primary level include specific references to issues and methodologies included in 'Primary Values'.

It is also anticipated that references within the resource (in the 'Bigger Picture') to issues in the wider world (including the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child),* may present pupils with an introduction to the concept of early citizenship, and offer them some preparative experience for their engagement with a new subject area at post primary level, entitled 'Democratic Citizenship.' 'Primary Values' seeks to encourage pupils to form and articulate views, to develop an awareness of the world around them and to participate as active citizens in their classrooms, schools and local and wider communities, aiming therefore to lay the foundations for understanding and engaging in participative citizenship.

Conclusion

While some informal feedback has been collected from teachers, there is clearly a need for a more formal evaluation of the 'Primary Values' resource. Where pupils have experienced sustained exposure to the resource, it would be particularly helpful to consider what impact if any, this has had on their approaches to thinking and discussion and the formation of attitudes and opinions. Further issues for evaluation include pupils' own perspectives of 'Primary Values', the perceived impact of using the resource on other dimensions of the curriculum, and additional needs of teachers regarding training and support.

Evaluation of the 'community of inquiry' has been undertaken through other research projects. Karen Murris's approach 'Teaching Philosophy with Picture Books' was used and evaluated by an education authority in Dyfed, Wales. Outcomes of the project included an increased range of thinking and reasoning skills being demonstrated by pupils, not only in the 'community of inquiry' but in other areas of the curriculum. Expressive language, listening and reading skills improved as the project progressed with five and six year olds sustaining concentration for up to an hour. Children's self-esteem was also enhanced, and teachers commented that children not only had more ideas but were more confident expressing them.

Similarly feedback from teachers participating in the 'Philosophy in the Primary School Project' (Robert Fisher, 1993-1996) reported an *"increased readiness* [by pupils] *to listen and engage with other children's thoughts"*, the *"development of more sophisticated opinions"* and *"an increasing number of original thoughts expressed in sessions."* Pupils themselves commented that it helped them to "think better" and they were *"able to really say what [they thought]"* and very importantly *"you're allowed to change your mind."*

A conclusive evaluation of the 'Primary Values' resource is therefore incomplete, however initial responses from teachers and pupils are clearly encouraging. The use of the 'community of inquiry' in a values education programme according to Fisher, is an effective model as it *"provides a living model of a moral community in action"* (Fisher 1990, 1996). Genuine values, it would seem are best created and tested through reflection and sustained discussion, and the 'community of inquiry' provides a model of values in action as well as an opportunity to subject values to critical inquiry'.

The various components of 'Primary Values' offer teachers and pupils the opportunity to engage with many different social, moral and emotional issues, which are intended to be of particular interest to pupils. It is not intended to be a complete or exclusive resource for the promotion of pupils' personal, social and moral development. Rather it offers an example, through the use of stories and structured inquiry of how teachers can access and manage meaningful reflection and dialogue around values and value-related issues in the primary school classroom.

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